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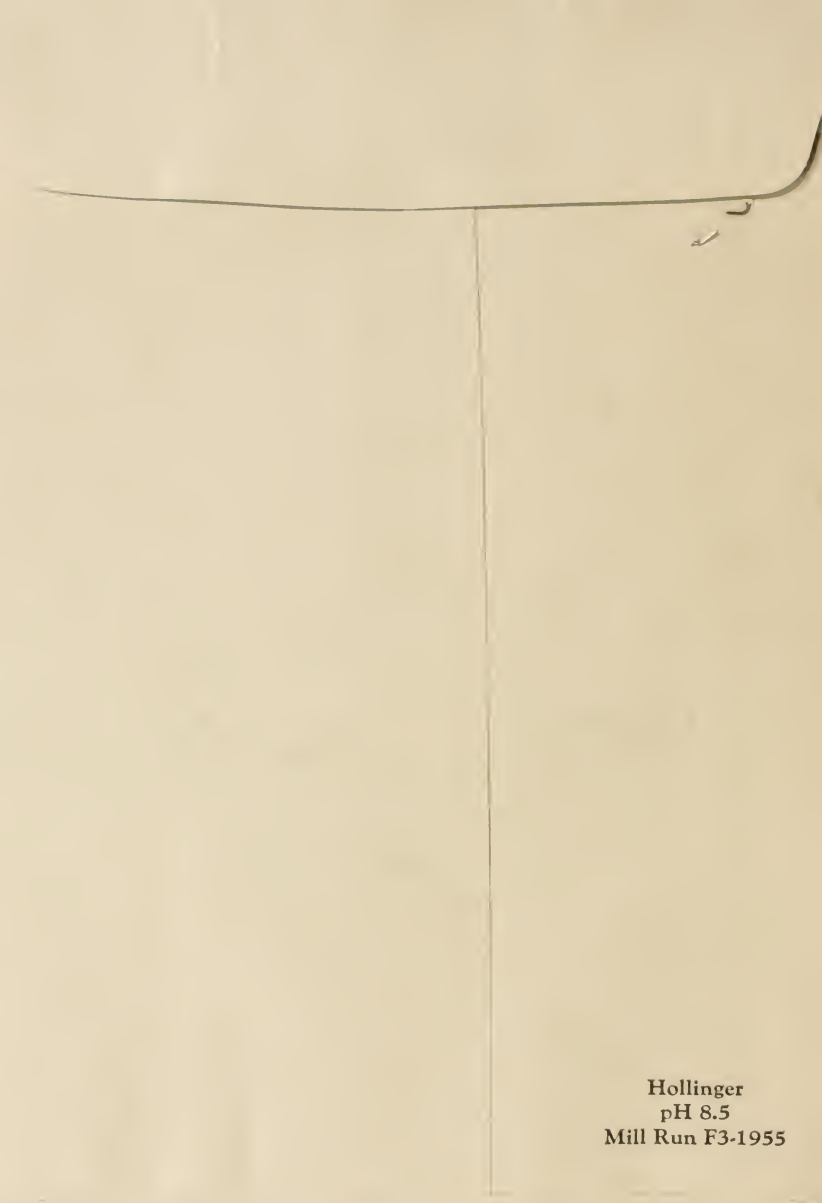

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# THE NATION'S SINS

AND

# THE NATION'S DUTY.

# THE NATION'S SINS AND THE NATION'S DUTY.

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## A Sermon,

PREACHED IN THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, POTTSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA,

ON

NATIONAL FAST DAY, APRIL 30, 1863.

BY

REV. WILLIAM B. STEWART.

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PHILADELPHIA:
WILLIAM S. & ALFRED MARTIEN,
606 CHESTNUT STREET.
1863.

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# SERMON.

CURSED BE HE THAT DOETH THE WORK OF THE LORD DECEITFULLY, AND CURSED BE HE THAT KEEPETH BACK HIS SWORD FROM BLOOD.

Jeremiah xlviii. 10.

THE word which is rendered *deceitfully*, in the text, is rendered *negligently*, in the margin. The original word conveys both ideas. The curse of Heaven is pronounced on all who do the work of the Lord deceitfully or negligently; and the declaration of the text is as true to-day as it was at the time it was uttered by the prophet Jeremiah. And as we have assembled together on a national occasion, it is highly proper for us to look at this great Scripture truth from a *national* stand-point. In fact, its original reference was national, and in the case of rebellion. According to the direction of the Lord, the Israelites had subdued the Moabites; but on the occasion to which the text refers, they had rebelled against the authority of Israel, and the Lord commissioned the Babylonians, under the penalty of a curse, to suppress their rebellion. He directs them by his servant, the prophet, to do it faithfully, and pronounces a curse upon every one who should refuse to unsheathe his sword for the purpose; or, having once taken up arms, should perform that work of the Lord deceitfully or negligently. Thus, you perceive, my friends, that it requires no special accommodation, to make the solemn truth contained in this passage of God's word applicable to us under present circumstances.

Taking a national view of the subject, then, the first important question which demands our attention, is, as to what is the great work which the Lord has given this nation to perform; and how have we performed it.

I. WHAT, THEN, IN THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD, IS THE GRAND MISSION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA?

It is plainly to be gathered from the history of God's dealings with this nation, that the grand mission with which he has honored it, is to teach the other nations of the earth the great lesson of FREEDOM. The grand problem which, I believe, our Divine Master has given us

to solve, is that of self-government, or of CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTY —liberty exercised and enjoyed according to the word of God. The world so regards our mission. Religious liberty, of course, implies civil liberty. In fact, the true idea of government is to secure to man the rights of conscience. All his other rights are subordinate, or implied in the rights of conscience, properly understood. Our Pilgrim Fathers were driven from their native land and the graves of their ancestors by the hand of tyranny and oppression, and forced to seek a home in America, where they might enjoy

"Freedom to worship God."

This was their grand idea, and the grand object of their mission to the shores of America; and the design of the Government which they formed, was mainly to protect them in the enjoyment of this liberty. They regarded the Lord Jesus Christ as their King, and themselves as the rightful subjects of his mediatorial kingdom. According to a certain writer* on this subject, "they undertook nothing which they did not ask him to prosper, and they accomplished nothing for which they did not give him the praise: they suffered nothing without carrying their sorrows to his throne, and they ate nothing which they did not ask him to bless." And when the time came, in the providence of God, for their separation from their mother country, these same immortal principles of liberty were embodied in their Declaration of Independence. Yes, the great experiment of self-government, according to the word of God, was to be made in America; and having formed our noble Constitution, the eyes of the world were turned to behold the results. The despots of the old world looked with alarm, lest the experiment might be successful; and their oppressed subjects looked, with anxious hearts, lest it might prove a failure!

The experiment has not failed, however, although it is now being tested by a most fiery ordeal; but I have no doubt, we shall yet come out of the fire, a better and a happier people, with a freer and a purer Government.

No, no; the great American experiment, notwithstanding our national sins, has not failed, and shall not fail, for God has a great work for us to do. We have not yet fulfilled our mission. We shall be, for ages hence, the asylum of the oppressed, and the hope of the downtrodden of other lands. The time is coming, when the foul blot of negro slavery shall be wiped from our national escutcheon, and when the air of America, to borrow the figure of Lord Mansfield, will be too pure for a slave, and when every man who breathes it shall be FREE.

The letters which our Divine Master has given us to inscribe upon the banners which he would have us unfurl to the nations of the earth, is, "*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*"

* Greenwood.

I believe that God, in his providence, has said to the people of this nation, almost as distinctly, and certainly as truly, as our Saviour said to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The United States of America is commissioned, by our Divine Master, as the great EVANGEL OF LIBERTY AND RELIGION among the nations of the earth. Her apostles of liberty and religion are yet to be found in all lands, and her missionaries are to plant the standard of the cross on every island of the ocean where it has not been already done. And should she fail in this mission, or perform it deceitfully or negligently, sore indeed will be her chastisements from the hands of the Lord. He has given us all the facilities necessary for the accomplishment of this great mission. He has given us a country whose resources are almost inexhaustible! Never was any nation of the earth so favorably situated for working out the great problem of human *Liberty* as the United States of America.

These few remarks may suffice to give some idea of the great work which the Lord has given this nation to perform; and it is eminently proper for us to inquire, on an occasion like this, how this great work has been performed.

## II. HAVE WE DONE IT DECEITFULLY OR NEGLIGENTLY?

It will be impossible, in a single discourse, to enumerate our national sins, on this subject, in detail. There are *two grand* sins, or mistakes, however, which I sincerely believe we have made, which will, perhaps, cover the whole ground.

1. Then, let us inquire, in the first place, if we have not been performing our national work deceitfully or negligently, *by departing from the principles of the gospel in the management of our national affairs—by gradually separating Christianity from our political and business life.*

Now, if this is true of us as a people, as I honestly believe it is, it is undoubtedly a departure from the design of our fathers in coming to this country, and from the design of God in bringing them here. Although they were opposed to the union of Church and State, as seen in European countries, yet they held that the Government should be administered according to the principles of the gospel. Our fathers understood the Bible to teach, that Government is a divine institution, and that the civil magistrate is the minister of God for good, and in this thing our fathers were not mistaken. They believed with Paul, that "the powers that be, are ordained of God," and that "whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." And one of the great sins of the nation is, that in the administration of our Government, and in the treatment of our regularly constituted rulers, and in the transaction of our business affairs, we have departed from the principles of the gospel. The individual exceptions, which might be named, would only prove the truth of this general statement.

The precise time when this departure from the word of God began,

we may not now be able to determine, and the reason is, because the angle of deflection is often so acute, that it cannot be seen until several steps have been taken. The traces of this departure may be seen, however, as far back, at least, as the formation of our national charter. It is certainly a fact, that while the existence of God is recognised, and our dependence on his providence is acknowledged in the Declaration of Independence, our national Constitution, noble in other respects, as it is, "pays no homage to the Deity"! His very existence is ignored, and our dependence upon him for "life, and breath, and all things," is not recognised in that instrument. This unfortunate omission, whether done "deceitfully or negligently," has brought upon us the opprobium of other nations, and, I fear, the chastisement of Heaven.

Whether from this beginning or not, the fact cannot be denied, that there has resulted an almost entire separation of the principles of the gospel from our political life; and the management of our political affairs has passed, with rare exceptions, of late years, into the hands of ungodly men!

It is said that "when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn," (Prov. xxix. 2,) and so they *ought* to mourn; and I hope there will be, on this Day of Humiliation and Prayer, *sincere* penitence and mourning among all the people; for religion appears to have lost that firm hold on our civil rulers which it ought to have, and which it once had; the oath of office has lost, with many, its solemn sanctions, and is now too often looked upon as a mere form, or unmeaning ceremony; and the duties of the Christian minister are circumscribed by the politician!! He must preach, in a very limited sense, nothing but "Christ, and him crucified," and the *politician*, and not the minister, must be the judge as to what that means!

Political sins, however enormous, must be ignored in the pulpit, even on a day of national humiliation and prayer!! And as the natural consequence of all this separation or divorcement of the Christian religion from our political life, the whole body politic has become so frightfully corrupt, that most men of integrity and of Christian principle recoil from it, as they would from the body of a leper! But it would be manifestly unjust to throw the entire responsibility of this political corruption on the politician or mere place-hunter. No, it is to be feared that the ministers of the gospel in our country, and professing Christians generally, have to bear a frightful share of this responsibility. For whilst they have seen a growing disposition, for years past, on the part of Latitudinarianism and Infidelity to demand an entire separation of the principles of the Christian religion from our social and political life, they have been too much disposed to yield to these infidel demands. Whilst I am decidedly opposed to preaching "politics or abolition," in the technical and opprobrious sense of these terms, yet I *do* think that the ministers of religion, and the professing Christians of our country, have been to a great extent unfaithful to their political duties!

Allow me here to quote the eloquent words of Dr. Boardman of Philadelphia on this point:—"Professing to regard Christianity as the paramount concern of man, and to recognise the Divine protection as the only security for nations, they have, to a great extent, abjured politics, and left the management of our affairs to whoever might succeed in seizing the reins. As a general thing, professing Christians have shunned nomination to office, and taken no pains to secure the election of suitable men. They have not brought their influence to bear, in any suitable degree, upon the course of legislation, so as to guard the interests of morality, and foster the healthy, conservative element in our institutions. They have too often sacrificed, either to personal ease or to *party*, what was due to their country; and by their silence, connived at that frightful corruption which has of late years spread like a leprosy through the whole domain of our politics."

Ah! my friends, the *political* sins of this nation are perfectly enormous—far more than enough to ruin the best Government, or to destroy the greatest nation that ever existed! And if I had the ear of this nation, on this day of humiliation and prayer, I would call upon it, in the name of *liberty* and *religion*, to repent in dust and ashes, lest a pure and holy God should blot it out of existence, on account of its political corruption! As a people, we have become proud and selfish, avaricious and ambitious. Many, especially in high places, have become so "impatient to be rich," that they cannot wait to acquire it honestly. The Government is often robbed by those who have been entrusted with the management of its affairs, and it has actually come to pass, that men can gamble, without remorse, upon the misfortunes of their country!

God has given us a great country, with great wealth and great prosperity. Yes, one whose wealth and resources are far more than sufficient to plant and maintain the standards of liberty and religion on every island of the ocean, and in every heathen land; and yet, as an unfaithful steward, this nation has used its wealth, to an alarming extent, for selfish and sinful purposes! The Church of our Lord in the United States of America has been unable, notwithstanding the wealth of the people, to answer, except to a very limited degree, the Macedonian cry, that comes daily from our own frontiers, as well as from foreign lands, "Come over and help us!" "Come over and help us!" Sometimes she has been obliged to call home the missionary of the cross in foreign fields for want of means to sustain him in his noble work, whilst many a faithful minister of the gospel at home is now suffering, or has been already pressed out of his field of labour for want of an adequate support. And yet money was never more abundant, and perhaps never so cheap, as at the present time!

Thus have we, as a nation, and often as individuals, been "doing the work of the Lord deceitfully or negligently," and since this is so, He is now chastising us with a heavy hand, and calling loudly upon us to repent. Since we would not use the wealth which He has given us for carrying out our grand mission, except in a deceitful or

negligent way, He is now drawing upon our national and private resources in a way we did not anticipate, and do not like, and drawing largely, too.

I wish I had the time and the ability to point out, on this occasion, the immense influence, for evil, of an UNGODLY PRESS in this country, where everybody reads. The PRESS is an immense engine for good or for evil. It is one of the great *powers* in this country; and when it does its work "deceitfully or negligently," who can estimate the evil results? I am indebted to the kindness of one of my ministerial brethren for the following statement:—"The power of the newspaper press may be seen in a statement made by Mr. Kinglake, historian of the Crimean war, an eminent statesman and close observer. He gives it as his conviction that the *Times* newspaper alone caused the Crimean war. And if so, it has made bankrupt an empire, caused the death of one of the greatest Emperors of the age, established another on his throne, rendered thousands of women husbandless and childless, killed more than one general, made or ruined the reputation of others, and made hundreds of our best families mourn."

Now, then, if it be true that the *London Times* was the cause of the Crimean war, and responsible for its immense evils, what shall we say of the influence of certain newspapers in our own country, over the Government, the people, and the army? I have not time to dwell on this point, but these remarks may suggest a train of thought which may lead you to see some of the immense evils which have resulted from doing the work of the Lord deceitfully, or negligently, by divorcing the principles of our holy religion from our political and business life. Is it not a sad fact, that so few of our rulers and business men conduct their affairs according to the principles of the word of God? How few there are, comparatively, who transact their business upon the Saviour's rule—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them!"

2. But there is another grand mistake which has been made, and which shows that the work of the Lord has been done deceitfully, or at least negligently, and that is, by neglecting, at the formation of the national government, to make *Constitutional* provision for the gradual removal of slavery, by compensative emancipation, or otherwise, from our country.

However blind or indifferent we may have been to the fact heretofore, it is easy for us *now* to see, that if this had been done, there would have been no slave States to-day, and no institution of slavery to produce rebellion and civil war in our beloved land. The Congress that adopted the Constitution, and the people who ratified it, were perfectly competent to make such a provision; they had the legitimate power to do so, had they chosen to exercise it. But no such provision was made, and the sin of that neglect has rested, ever since, on the nation, and has, at length, culminated in the present wicked rebellion. I regard the formation of this Union as the work of the Lord, and our national Constitution as the noblest instrument of the kind that has ever been produced; but it is not infallible—it has its defects, and

especially is this the case if it be the result of compromise, for the very idea of compromise implies imperfection: and I regard the omission to which I have referred as one, at least, of its defects.

It is a well known fact that the man who composed, and the committee that recommended to Congress, the Declaration of Independence, were opposed to slavery, and hoped to see it one day removed from the land; and hence they did not hesitate to incorporate into that immortal document this great self-evident truth, "That *all* men are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." But the Constitution, although based upon the Declarations of Rights and of Independence, makes no provision by which those "persons held to service" in the United States should, at any time, be permitted to enjoy those inalienable rights with which their Creator, according to the Declaration, has endowed them.

But should it be said that the Constitution is the result of compromise, that it is the best that could be obtained at the time; or that with any provision for even the ultimate removal of slavery, it would have been rejected by the slave States, which were then in the majority, I would reply by saying, that this may all be true, and yet it does not alter the fact, that such a provision *ought* to have been made. Whoever may have been most responsible for this neglect, it is easy for us *now* to see, since slavery has occasioned the rebellion, what a sad mistake it was. But whilst this is true, and whilst it is proper for us on a day of humiliation and prayer to express our regrets for this sad and sinful omission, and humbly to seek the forgiveness of Almighty God, still it is our duty, as loyal and patriotic citizens, to stand by the Constitution, notwithstanding its defects, and at all hazards, as the supreme law of the land, until it can be amended in the *Constitutional* way.

III. I remark, in the next place, that the Lord has permitted these two national sins which I have mentioned, and which, perhaps, comprehend the whole of our national transgressions, TO CULMINATE IN A WICKED REBELLION AND A CIVIL WAR, IN ORDER TO SHOW US OUR INIQUITIES, AND TO BRING US TO REPENTANCE.

How different might have been our circumstances to-day, if all our business transactions, and our political affairs, had been conducted on the principles of the gospel, and if we had not suffered the great evil of negro slavery to remain so long in our country; for, in order to perpetuate and extend it, nearly all of the slaveholding States have attempted, by violence and by war, to dissolve our glorious Union, and to destroy the Nation! Instead of our sons and our brothers having been called to arms in defence of our liberties and the Union, they would be at home to-day, enjoying and practicing the arts of peace, and not the arts of war. And let those who would sympathize with this rebellion, or oppose our Government in its efforts to put it down, remember, that the wailings of widowhood and of orphanage

which are heard in the land, have been produced by this pro-slavery rebellion, and that every one of our friends and brothers who have fallen on the battle-field, has been *murdered* by the institution of slavery! Yes, my friends, we now see what a great mistake we have made; and God himself has, doubtless, undertaken to do for our country, and for the oppressed African amongst us, what we have neglected to do, and he is doing it in such a way as to chastise the nation sorely for this neglect. And we may see, moreover, that no nation, no more than any individual, "can harden itself against God and prosper."

O let us humble ourselves this day before God, and repent in dust and ashes, for, "who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?"

IV. Again, I remark, that THE OVERTHROW OF THE PRESENT SOUTHERN REBELLION IS THE WORK OF THE LORD, OR THE WORK WHICH HE HAS NOW GIVEN US TO PERFORM.

Although the Lord has permitted our sins to culminate in the awful calamity of civil war, and permitted it as a chastisement for those sins, yet it is just as much our duty to suppress this rebellion, and by force of arms, so long as the rebels remain in arms against us, as it is our duty to humble ourselves before God, and repent and forsake the sins which brought these evils upon us. It certainly requires no laboured argument to prove this. No truly loyal man will dispute it. I have never been able to find a single argument to justify this rebellion, but many to show its wickedness. It began in treachery, robbery, and repudiation. Something like four hundred million of debts, justly due the North, have been repudiated by the South! Many of the States were dragged out of the Union, by the rebel leaders, without consulting the popular will! It was in violation of the oath of allegiance and of office. Its avowed object is to perpetuate and extend negro slavery, by means of a slave-holding Confederacy, and the dissolution of the Union! And who but a rebel, or a rebel *sympathizer*, will say, that *such* a rebellion is just, or that it is not right to sustain our Government, and especially the executive power of the Government, in his efforts to suppress it?

I hold that the President of the United States, according to the Scriptures, is the minister of God, no matter by what political party he was placed in the presidential chair. "The powers that be, are ordained of God." "He is the minister of God to thee for good." Rom. xiii. This is my authority. According to the Scriptures, then, we are under *religious* obligations to sustain, and not oppose, the Government in the legitimate exercise of its powers.

On this point there is, perhaps, no difference of opinion. The only point of difference is, as to what constitutes the Government of the United States. In order to settle this question, we need only refer to our national charter. According to that instrument, our Government consists of three branches—the legislative, the executive, and the judicial. The legislative power is vested in Congress the judicial

power, in one Supreme Court, and as many inferior courts as Congress may determine; and Article II., Section 1st, of the Constitution, says, that "the executive power shall be vested in a President of the United States of America;" and Section 2d says, that "the President shall be Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy of the United States, and the militia of the several States, when called into the service of the United States."

The *President*, then, is the "Executive Power" of the Government. He is, in fact, the constituted head of the *whole* Government; and that is not all, for he is constitutionally the *Commander-in-Chief* of the army and navy. Yes, Abraham Lincoln is the *Executive Government* of our country at present, and will be, if he lives, during his term of office. There is no other, and we can have no other without a revolution. We may not like Abraham Lincoln as a man, and we may not regard some of his official acts, or war-measures, as the wisest and best, but we cannot oppose him as the *President*, and the *Commander-in-Chief* of the army and navy, without opposing an *essential* and *constitutional* part of the Government.

No more palpable mistake was ever made, than to suppose that a man can be loyal to the Government and disloyal to the President. Why, the *President* is the Government—the Executive Government! The distinction which some men would make between the President and the Government, is not only unconstitutional, but foolish and absurd. The President, with the Constitution in his hand, can say to those who denounce him, at the same time that they profess to be loyal to the Government, as Louis XIV. of France said to his opponents, "The Government, it is I." But it is not only unconstitutional, but also *unscriptural*, to oppose and resist the Executive branch of the Government. We are under *religious* obligations to sustain the President. Now, this is not preaching politics, or abolition, in the opprobious sense of those terms, but the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is he who says, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," and it is one of his own inspired apostles who says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power," i. e., no lawfully constituted power, as the President of the United States for example, "but of God." Rom. xiii. 1. "*Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey* MAGISTRATES." Titus iii. 1. This was Paul's charge to Titus, and through him to us. Every minister of the gospel is bound, on all proper occasions like the present one, to put the people in mind to obey *Magistrates*, for they are the ministers of God for good. But this is not preaching politics, so called. I know that a man who prays for the President, or for the success of our arms, is liable to the charge of "abolition," but that epithet is fast losing its sting. I am not an abolitionist, in the technical sense of that term, and yet I have all my life been opposed to slavery, and hope to see the day when the evil shall be removed from my beloved country. I never have preached politics in the pulpit, and never expect to. I have no party interests to subserve. I take my stand on the broad platform of Christian patriotism,

with the Bible in one hand, and the Constitution of the United States of America in the other. I love my country, and I sustain the Government of my country because the *Bible* and the *Constitution* make it my duty to do so. I hold that the Chief Magistrate of the United States, no matter whether he be called a Democrat or a Republican, is the minister of God, according to the Scriptures, and that opposition to him, especially in a crisis like the present, is treasonable and wicked. This does not mean, that in the next Presidential campaign there may not be opposing candidates in the field. No, it has nothing to do with that question. The Constitutional majority of the people may elect whom they please for President, but when once elected, they are bound to sustain him, minority as well as majority, and it is anti-democratic not to do so.

But there is another reason why we should sustain our Government, a reason suggested by the text. It is because the object of the Government in the present crisis, or the work in which it has been engaged, and at which it still aims, is the Lord's work. As to what the object of the Government is, there need be no misunderstanding, since that object has been repeatedly declared in the most distinct and ample manner. Both houses of Congress have declared to the world that *the sole and only object of the war is to suppress the rebellion and restore the Union.* The same purpose is affirmed in the Diplomacy of the Government with foreign powers, and in the Messages of the President to Congress. Even in his celebrated proclamation of last September, he declares that "*Hereafter, as heretofore, the war will be prosecuted for the object of practically restoring the Constitutional relation between the United States and the people thereof, in such States as that relation is or may be disturbed.*" Such is the *object* of the Government in the prosecution of the war; and I hold that this object is right and proper, that it is "the work of the Lord."

It is an easy matter for *party* purposes to raise the cry of "abolition," and assert that it is a war for the negro, and not for the Union. But so far as the Government is concerned, there is not one word of truth in it. The original and legitimate object of the war has not been perverted by the Government, or by the President, if you prefer. "The position at *first* taken by the Government, is the one maintained to-day."

But has not the Government, it has been asked, resorted to emancipation, as to the slaves of the rebels? Yes, and for the very same reason that it has raised an army and built a navy, to break down the rebellion and restore the Union. The emancipation of the slaves in the revolted States is not the object of the war, but one of the *means* adopted by the Government for the *accomplishment* of the object. The *object* is to restore the Union by suppressing the rebellion. You may think the emancipation policy of the Government unwise—you may even doubt its constitutionality, and I may think just the opposite. I may regard it as a *grand* stroke of policy—one which has almost entirely revolutionized the popular opinion of France and England in our favour, and which has done more to prevent foreign inter-

vention than almost any one thing which the Government could have done. We have a right to our private opinions, and a right to express them, when it can be done without injury to the Government; but whilst this is so, we should remember that, as to whether the Emancipation Proclamation was a judicious war measure or not, the President, according to the Constitution, is the sole judge, and it is our duty, as good citizens, to acquiesce in his judgment.

These arguments are made to show that the work which the Lord has given our Government to perform at present, is to suppress the rebellion and restore the Union, and to warn you against the sin of opposing it in such a work. I hold that we are under the most solemn obligations to sustain the Government in this work, both from motives of patriotism and religion; and that if the Government, or the army or the navy, or any considerable portion of the people, have been doing this "work of the Lord negligently or deceitfully," it becomes us to humble ourselves before God, and in the spirit of penitence to implore his forgiveness.

Is it not, then, a legitimate point of inquiry for you and for me, How have we been doing the work of the Lord; and especially that portion of it which has for its object the suppression of the rebellion and the restoration of the Union? Have we been doing it "deceitfully or negligently," or, have we been opposing it altogether? And shall I not, as a faithful minister of the gospel, declare the whole counsel of God, contained in this portion of his word, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear? Then I shall be obliged to notice the two remaining points of the text, in its application to our duty under present circumstances; first, Who are they who do this work of the Lord deceitfully? and, secondly, What is meant by keeping back the sword from blood or from this work? In my remarks on these two points, I shall take it for granted that the work in which our Government is at present engaged, viz , the suppression of the rebellion and the restoration of the Union, is the work of the Lord.

1. *Who, then, are they who do this work of the Lord deceitfully?*

I would regard it as doing the work of the Lord deceitfully, for a member of Congress, *e. g.*, to oppose all the war measures of the Government as unwise and unconstitutional, and yet never offering any others in their stead—to make loud professions of loyalty to the Constitution and the Union, and at the same time to oppose every measure of the Government to maintain the Constitution and the Union, and yet have nothing to offer in its place. If men are honest in their opposition to the measures of the Government, it is to be presumed that they would have something more efficient to offer in their stead.

The sentiment of the text will apply to those officers of our army and navy, if such there be, who profess to be fighting for their country, whilst their real motives are selfish and ambitious, or who may not be thoroughly loyal. I would regard it as doing the work of the Lord deceitfully, for any of the commanding generals, from

motives of ambition, jealousy, &c., to refuse to coöperate on the battle-field, or to carry out faithfully the orders of their superiors in command. And in almost every community, there are individuals to be found who profess to be loyal, and who even affect to be insulted when it is called in question, and yet they have not been heard to utter a loyal sentiment since the war began!

2. Again, I remark, that the text applies to the man who *refuses to unsheathe his sword in the defence of his country, or who calls for peace, when God, in his providence, calls for war, or when there is no visible means of peace but the sword.* It may mean all who would oppose the Government, or throw obstacles in the way of a vigorous prosecution of the war for the suppression of the rebellion; all who would resist the draft, for example, or who refuse to bear their share of the expenses of the war. I understand it as referring in its application to all opposition to the President, as Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy, whether by individuals, or by secret associations for the purpose—whether from cowardice, or for party purposes, or from sympathy with rebellion.

Now I assert, that in the light of God's word, and in the light of history, they who act thus in opposition to the Government, and to the war, when there is nothing left us *but* war, or ruin, must incur a fearful responsibility. "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully or negligently, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood," saith the Lord.

The war in which we are engaged is a *popular* one, because it is just; and opposition to it, sooner or later, will be disastrous. The odium of this opposition, and of this treason, will descend upon the children of those who make it, whilst their own names will go down to posterity with that of Aaron Burr or Benedict Arnold! It always has been so, and always will be so. It was so with the tories of the American Revolution; it was so with the traitors in the war of 1812; and it will doubtless be so with those who oppose the war in which we are now engaged. Because the Hartford Convention was regarded as treasonable, the very name has ever since been held in execrable remembrance. It is said that in the party in England that opposed the Peninsular war, not one ever after rose to office or power. It required, says the historian from whom I quote, a whole generation, in the opinion of the English constituencies, to expiate the faults of those who had sneered at the great Duke, and had called the glorious fields of Talavera, Badajoz, &c., "barren victories, equal in their effects to defeats."

Now, then, my friends, let us take warning from God's word, and from the history of the past. Let us beware of incurring the fearful responsibility of doing "the work of the Lord deceitfully or negligently" whatever it may be, and let us beware of opposing the Government, or the War in which it is now engaged, lest by so doing we might be found opposing God; but let us follow the teachings of his word, and abide by the Constitution and the laws of the land.

You are aware that God sent his angel, on a certain occasion, to curse the inhabitants of Meroz, "because they came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty;" and let us, as a constituent part of this great nation, on this Day of Humiliation and Prayer, repent, and forsake our sins, and seek forgiveness, lest the curse of God come upon us for a similar reason; for not coming up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against this *mighty rebellion*. In the management of all our national and individual affairs, let there be a return to the word of God. Let our business be conducted on the principle of the Saviour's golden rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

In our present national troubles let all hearts be united, and united on the principle of Christian patriotism, in sustaining our Government in its efforts to suppress the rebellion and restore the Union. It is no time now to engage in mere party strife, when our beloved country is bleeding at every pore, when our liberties are at stake, and the best Government which God has given to man is in danger of being overwhelmed! No, no! Let it be written in letters of gold upon the door-posts of our dwellings and upon our banners, that OUR ONLY HOPE IS IN GOD AND A UNITED NORTH.

One of the great sins of the day is *party politics*—that there are so many men in our country who seem to love their *party* more than they love God and their country! Our cause is just; the efforts of our Government are right; it is the work of the Lord, and we are called upon, by every consideration of patriotism and religion, to sustain our Government by our influence, our prayers, our means, and LIVES, if need be, in its efforts to suppress this unholy rebellion, and to restore the UNION and PEACE!

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